

12 Immediate Post Earthquake Safety Messages

The following 12 safety messages can be broadcast immediately after a damaging earthquake. Newspapers are encouraged to use the information prior to an earthquake. The information in the messages is based on suggestions from California and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Missouri's State Emergency Management Agency (SEMA) sent this information to local Emergency Management Directors for their earthquake files.

1. "Stay Clear" use in the first hour after a damaging earthquake.

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

There's been a strong earthquake and the danger may not be over. There could be more shaking.

If it is safe where you are right now, your best bet is to stay put. Don't go outside unless you think the building you are in is unsafe.

If the shaking starts again, protect yourself by staying away from windows and taking cover under a sturdy piece of furniture or by an interior wall.

Cover your head and neck with your arms and wait until the shaking stops.

If you are outdoors when an aftershock begins, stay in the open away from buildings, signs or overhead wires.

Stay tuned to this station and read your newspaper for more lifesaving information.

2. "Flash Lights" use in the first hour after a damaging earthquake.

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

A strong earthquake hit the area. As you start checking damages, here is some safety specific information for utilities:

If you smell or hear leaking gas, open your windows and get everyone out of the building immediately. If you smell smoke, get everyone out of the building immediately.

If you think there might be a gas leak, do not switch electric lights on or off. If you need more light use a flashlight! A match, lighter, candle or a spark from an electric switch could start a fire or even cause an explosion.

Stay tuned to this station and read your newspaper for more lifesaving information.

3. “Home Safety” use in the first hour after a damaging earthquake

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

A strong earthquake hit the area. If you are at home, here are some first steps you should take:

Check on your family members. Make sure you have first aid supplies readily available.

Use a fire extinguisher to put out small fires. Do not use water on electrical or gas fires. If you cannot put the fire out quickly, get everyone out of the building immediately.

Check for gas leaks. If you smell gas, open the windows and move everyone outside

Inspect your home’s foundation, walls and chimneys. Look and listen for any signs of possible collapse.

Stay tuned to this station and read your newspaper for more lifesaving information.

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4. “No Phones” use in the first hour after a damaging earthquake

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

There’s been a strong earthquake and more shaking is possible.

The police and fire departments know about the earthquake. They are busy responding to most serious problems first.

Please, stay off the telephone – including your cell phone – unless you are reporting a life-threatening injury or a fire.

Unnecessary calls to report the earthquake or to check on friends or relatives could keep life saving calls from getting through to emergency personnel.

Stay tuned to this station and read your newspaper for more lifesaving information.

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5. “Driving” use in the first hour after a damaging earthquake

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

Stronger shaking could follow the earthquake.

It is best to stay off the roads right now. But, if you must drive and the shaking starts again, pull over and stop in the first safe place you can find – away from underpasses, power lines and overhanging signs.

Once you stop, stay inside your car.

If you are on a bridge or an overpass, keep moving – slowly and carefully until you are off the bridge. Then look for a safe place to stop until the shaking is over.

Stay tuned to this station and read your newspaper for more lifesaving information.

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6. “More Home Safety” use in the first hour after a damaging earthquake

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

If you are in a safe place right now, stay there if you can. The earthquake danger may not be over. There could be strong aftershocks.

If you are at home and there is no immediate sign of collapse, fire or gas leaks, it is time to take a closer look at your utility connections.

Turn off any appliance that was on when the earthquake hit and check it for damage.

Check your water heater. If it fell over in the earthquake, it may have broken gas, electric or water lines.

If your utilities are damaged, turn the damaged utilities off at the electric, gas or water main meter.

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7. “Water” use in the first hour after a damaging earthquake.

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

If your neighborhood has suffered earthquake damages, try to store water now for use later. Start by filling your bathtub and any large containers.

If your water heater is undamaged, the water inside it will be useful for drinking and cooking. If the water in the toilet in the storage tank is clear, you may be able to use it also. Do not use the water in the bowl.

Plan on sterilizing any water that isn’t already bottled. You can sterilize water by boiling it for five minutes. You can also sterilize water by adding three to four drops of liquid chlorine laundry bleach per quart of water and letting the mixture stand for half an hour.

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8. “Safety” use in the first hour after a damaging earthquake.

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

Even though the earthquake shaking may have stopped. There is still a risk of strong aftershocks.

If you are safe, your best option is to stay put. Help the people around you – your family, your neighbors, or your co-workers.

Clean up any spilled flammable liquids or other hazardous cleaning materials.

Be alert for the possibility of a fire.

If you must move from either your home or your place of business, leave a note on the front door to tell family or emergency workers where you have gone.

Stay tuned to this station and read your newspaper for more lifesaving information.

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9. “Check on People” use starting 2 hours after a damaging earthquake

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

Police, firefighters and ambulance personnel are dealing with the worst of the earthquake problems. The biggest source of help right now is you!

If your area is damaged, check on other people around you – your family and neighbors if you are at home, or your co-workers if you are still at work.

Use first aide to treat injuries.

Remember small children and senior citizens may need special attention and reassurance, even if they seem O.K. People with special needs may need extra help also.

Stay tuned to this station and read your newspaper for more lifesaving information.

10. “Food” use starting 2 hours after a damaging earthquake.

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

After an earthquake, some hot food in the stomach can help everyone feel better. It is not too early to start feeding people.

Plan your meals carefully. If your power is off, eat the perishable foods and the food in your refrigerator first. Then eat the food in your freezer. Leave the food stored in your pantry for last.

Unless you are sure your gas and electronic connections are safe, cook outside on a barbecue, a charcoal grill or a camping stove. Remember these cooking sources are only for outdoor use.

Stay tuned to this station and read your newspaper for more lifesaving information.

11. “Check List” use starting 2 hours after a damaging earthquake.

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

If the earthquake has damaged your neighborhood, here are some things you should do:

Stay calm and keep in touch with neighbors or coworkers.

Stay off the telephone.

Wear sturdy shoes.

Store water in a bathtub or large containers and sterilize water that wasn't bottled before using it.

Turn off leaking gas or damaged electric utilities at the meters.

Clean up broken glass, medicines and flammable liquids.

Every hour or so, take a few minutes to rest and plan your next actions.

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12. “Check List Don'ts” use starting 2 hours after a damaging earthquake.

This is a special safety message from your state and local emergency management agencies.

If the earthquake has damaged your neighborhood, here are some things you should not to do:

Do not turn off your gas at the meter unless you actually smell gas or smoke.

If you turn off your gas, do not turn it back on again. Only a gas company specialist can relight a gas line.

Do not use matches, lighters, or candles until you are sure there are no gas leaks.

Do not use the telephone, unless it is a lifesaving emergency.

Do not waste water.

Do not go sightseeing.

Do not forget, strong aftershocks are possible at any time.

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